
Guest blogger Roman Reed: spinal cord injury stem cell trials get \$25 million boost from CIRM

Posted: May 5, 2011

Created: 05/05/2011 - 09:55

From the editor: Yesterday the CIRM governing board approved a \$25 million loan to help fund a trial testing the use of an embryonic stem cell-derived therapy for spinal cord injury. Here's our press release. Our guest blogger Roman Reed was injured in a football accident and has since fought tirelessly for spinal cord injury research.

Yesterday's announcement that CIRM will help fund the Geron spinal cord injury Human Trials ensures that paralysis cure will have its day!

It was my honor to be the inspiration of the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act in 1999, which provided the original funding for Hans Keirstead's research which is being tested in these trials, the first in the world.

However, the expense of the trials might conceivably have exhausted Geron's financial resources, narrowing the scope of the trials. This would have been devastating, not only to our hopes for paralysis cure but also for the entire field. The world is watching. Had the trials been too limited for lack of funding, it might have cast a shadow of doubt on its outcome-- instead, the trials go forward, strongly.

Geron's nine year struggle to build a mountain of preliminary data (so the FDA could approve the human trials) was an heroic effort, on which so much depended. With the leadership of Geron, the courageous biomed company came through for California and our country, and the world-- and so did the California stem cell program.

When the oversight committee announced its decision yesterday, it authorized a \$25 million dollar loan to Geron to assist in the clinical trials. This was a careful loan, milestone driven, with each installment given only on the successful completion of predetermined goals.

I join the patient advocate community across the globe in expressing absolute full support of CIRM's decision to provide funding for America's first hESC derived Human Clinical Trials.

As a Patient and Patient advocate, I am overjoyed that Prop.71 took a stand for the Geron trials, the most important experiment in the world for the fields of spinal cord injury, neuro-regenerative medicine and stem cell research.

Truly, the Geron Trials are setting the pace of spinal cord injury. Paralysis affects 650,000 Californians and 1.9 million Americans, with an additional 5.6 million Americans who suffer from all forms of paralysis. (Here's information about CIRM's funding for spinal cord injury stem cell research.)

This epic step was accomplished through partnership and collaboration through a new age continuum of support beginning with State funding from Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act, Education at the University of California, Irvine, private industry support from Geron and voter-approved CIRM/State funds.

In a truly historic partnership for stem cell research and cure, state funding from what has been called "Roman's Law" gave Hans Keirstead the seed money to achieve empirical evidence and proof of principle. Hans then sold his pioneering technique to Geron, and advanced biotechnology farther by founding California Stem Cell with the proceeds.

With admirable courage and determination, Geron pushed this science all the way to FDA approval to become the world's first embryonic stem cell derived human clinical trial.

Now our beloved state agency, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine will provide funding to bring about a full and complete Human Clinical Trial!!

The Keirstead/Geron/CIRM Trials advances the entire field of stem cell research.

Today's vote of support is a truly historic milestone in medicine.

Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to the beginning of personalized stem cell medicine and cure!

Thank you Prop.71 for Taking A Stand-- So One Day-Everybody Can!

Here's Roman Reed discussing stem cell-based therapies for spinal cord injury:

Tags: Geron, Reed, spinal cord injury

Source URL: <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/blog/05052011/guest-blogger-roman-reed-spinal-cord-injury-stem-cell-trials-get-25-million-boost-cirm>